



May 11, 2018

Representative Klint Kesto, Chairman  
House Law and Justice Committee  
Anderson House Office Building  
124 North Capitol Avenue  
Lansing, MI 48933

Representative Stephanie Chang, Minority Vice-Chair  
House Law and Justice Committee  
Anderson House Office Building  
124 North Capitol Avenue  
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Chairman Kesto and Minority Vice-Chair Chang:

On behalf of RAINN, I respectfully urge you to support passage of the following bills: S.B. 871, S.B. 874; S.B. 878; S.B. 879; and S.B. 880. Together, these bills will ensure Michigan remains a national leader in the work to protect children against sexual predators.

As you may be aware, RAINN is the nation's largest anti-sexual assault organization. RAINN created and operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline (800.656.HOPE and [rainn.org](http://rainn.org)), which has helped more than two and a half million people since 1994, and operates the DoD Safe Helpline on behalf of the Department of Defense. RAINN also carries out programs to prevent sexual assault, help victims, and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice. Every 98 seconds an American is sexually assaulted, and every eight minutes, authorities find evidence that a child in America has been the victim of sexual abuse. More than two-thirds of these crimes are never reported to police, and only six out of every 1,000 perpetrators will be incarcerated for their crime.

The need for criminal statutes of limitations reform has perhaps never been clearer, and we applaud Michigan for joining a growing list of states taking a critical eye to their laws in this area. For some victims, a delayed decision to report is the product of very real and devastating physical and psychological effects of the crime. A recent National Institutes of Health study found that 80 percent of people who were sexually abused as children waited until adulthood to disclose the abuse. Many victims cite a lack of trust in the system as a reason for their decision not to report. We have a responsibility to create a system where more victims choose to report because they believe it is in their best interest. Eliminating barriers to a victim's ability to report the crimes committed against them serves a state's overall public safety interest to hold perpetrators of sexual assault – who are often serial offenders – accountable.

RAINN's chief recommendation to state lawmakers is the elimination of the criminal statute of limitations for felony-level sex offenses. To that end, we offer support for support S.B. 871's proposal to eliminate the statutory limitation for Criminal Sexual Conduct in the Second Degree for minor victims, and respectfully encourage you to consider extending the same protection to *all* minor victims by also eliminating the statute of limitations for Third Degree Criminal Sexual Conduct.

Further, RAINN supports the goal of S.B. 878 and S.B. 879 to strengthen Michigan's sentencing guidelines for Aggravated Possession of Child Sexually Abusive Material. The impact of this crime is devastating and can have lifelong repercussions. A single image, once viral, can be passed from person-to-person, state-to-state, country-to-country, indefinitely and with little hope of ever being fully erased. Nationwide, child pornography possession arrests are on the rise: three times as many offenders were arrested in 2013 as in 2004, a steady trend that shows no sign of reversing. For these reasons, it makes policy sense to, as proposed in S.B. 879 and



S.B. 878, refine the definition of and strengthen penalties for crimes of child pornography. Finally, RAINN recommends your support of bills S.B. 874 and S.B. 880 to strengthen Michigan's Child Protection Law. We must do all we can to ensure reports of sexual crimes against children are timely and investigations rigorous.

In closing, we hope you will support these measures which advance the goals of prioritizing the public safety of Michigan's citizens and bringing much-deserved healing and justice to survivors. Thank you for your continued leadership and consideration of our recommendations. We are here to answer any questions you might have. (rebecca@rainn.org)

Sincerely,

Rebecca W. O'Connor, Esq.  
Vice President of Public Policy